

What is claimed is:

## CLAIMS

1. A consumable article, comprising:

- 5           a consumable item; and  
          a memory device organized such that the use of the consumable item causes the memory device to be reorganized wherein the organization of the memory device represents currency.

2. An apparatus, comprising:

- 10           the consumable item of claim 1 further comprising a control circuit capable of updating the memory device of the consumable item;  
          wherein when the apparatus consumes the consumable item, the control circuit updates the memory device wherein the representation of currency is modified.

15   3. The apparatus of claim 2 wherein the apparatus is a printing device.

4. The apparatus of claim 2 wherein the apparatus is a plotting device.

5. The apparatus of claim 2 wherein the apparatus is a computer.

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6. The apparatus of claim 2 wherein the apparatus is an MP3 player.

7. The apparatus of claim 2 further comprising:

- 25           a network interface for interfacing to a clearinghouse, the network interface coupled to said control circuit.

8. The consumable article of claim 1 wherein the consumable article is a media creation cartridge.

30   9. The consumable article of claim 8 wherein the media creation cartridge is an ink-jet printer cartridge.

10. The consumable article of claim 8 wherein the media creation cartridge is a laser-jet toner cartridge.

5 11. The consumable article of claim 8 wherein the media creation cartridge is a plotter pen cartridge.

12. The consumable article of claim 1 wherein the media creation cartridge is an energy delivery vehicle.

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13. The consumable article of claim 12 wherein the energy delivery vehicle is a battery.

14. The consumable article of claim 12 wherein the energy delivery vehicle is a fuel source.

15 15. A method for exchanging payments, comprising the steps of:  
representing an amount of a consumable item as currency;  
expending a portion of the currency; and  
preventing the use of a portion of the consumable item in proportion to the amount of  
expended portion of currency.

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16. The method of claim 15, further comprising the steps of:  
contacting a clearing house to make a payment representing the expended portion of  
currency; and  
after payment, allowing the use of the portion of the consumable item.

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17. A method of exchanging payments, comprising the steps of:  
storing an amount of electronic currency in a memory device in a consumable item;  
expending a portion of the consumable item wherein the use of the consumable item  
incurs a debit charge; and

30 reducing the amount of electronic currency in the memory device of the consumable  
item.

18. The method of claim 17, further comprising the step of:  
before allowing the step of expending a portion of the consumable item, verifying that  
the amount of debit charge is not greater than the amount of electronic currency in the memory  
5 device.

19. The method of claim 18, further comprising the step of:  
if the amount of debit charge is verified as greater than the amount of electronic currency  
in the memory device, preventing the expending of a portion of the consumable item.

20. A method of exchanging payments, comprising the steps of:  
purchasing a consumable item;  
creating a digital cash account for the consumable item;  
expending a portion of the consumable item wherein the use of the consumable item  
15 incurs a debit charge;  
reducing the amount of the digital cash account by the amount of the debit charge  
incurred.

21. The method of claim 20, further comprising the steps of:  
20 acquiring royalty based content that indicates an owner of the content and the amount of  
debit charge for using the content;  
updating a digital cash account for the owner of the content by the amount reduced from  
the digital cash account for the consumable item.

22. An apparatus including a consumable item using the method of claim 15 to exchange  
25 payments.

23. An apparatus including a consumable item using the method of claim 17 to exchange  
payments.

24. An apparatus including a consumable item using the method of claim 20 to exchange payments.